

were Mexican nationals wanted in the United States for drug-related crimes.

Additionally, Mexico expelled drug kingpin Juan Garcia Abrego. These facts speak for themselves, showing that diligent efforts are being made by the Government of Mexico.

In my hand I have a letter from the Ambassador of Mexico responding to the charges that have been leveled against our neighbor to the south.

I would like to quote the following:

Mexico is aware that much more needs to be done by us and other countries in the fight against drugs. This is a permanent fight, not just an annual exercise. While there have been failures and setbacks, they are mostly due to the magnitude of the problem and the power of the enemy, not to a lack of political will by our country.

The reason why we fight against drugs is not to get a grade or a certification from anyone. We fight against drugs because we want to preserve our institutions, because we want to protect our youth, and because we are convinced that we need international cooperation to effectively deal with this gigantic problem.

Decertification will also result in severe economic, social, and cultural ramifications along our Nation's border. When bad things happen to Mexico, bad things happen to us in south Texas. When Mexico goes into a recession, my counties go into a recession. When illegal immigration increases due to crises in Mexico, then it increases in my 11 counties.

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When the peso drops, retail and real estate sales drop. When friendly relations with Mexico are strained, the people of my district also suffer. To turn our backs on our neighbor is to jeopardize the progress they have made. We need to recognize their commitment and the work they have done to date.

Again, let me reiterate, on March 1, the President certified Mexico. Then we have heard from many who feel this was not a wise decision.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I appreciate the opportunity to have been able to have given my first 5 minutes.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to proceed out of order and present my 5-minute remarks at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DIAZ-BALART). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

UNFAIR GOVERNMENT COMPETITION WITH SMALL BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. DUNCAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, when the White House Conference on Small Busi-

ness met in 1995, it listed unfair government competition with small businesses as one of its top concerns and most serious problems. This is not a new problem. In fact, during the Eisenhower administration in 1955, the administration felt it necessary to adopt as official U.S. policy the following statement:

The Federal Government will not start or carry on any commercial activity to provide a service or product for its own use if such product or service can be procured from private enterprise through ordinary business channels.

Yet every day in almost every congressional district, big government agencies are competing with small businesses. This is why I have introduced H.R. 716, the Freedom from Government Competition Act. This legislation is supported very strongly by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Business Coalition for Fair Competition, and numerous other professional associations, too many to list at this time.

In addition, H.R. 716 already has more than 20 cosponsors from both parties and Senator CRAIG THOMAS has introduced a companion bill in the Senate. This legislation will require that Federal agencies get out of private industry and stick to performing those functions that only Government can do well. At the same time, it will allow our great private free enterprise system to do those things it does best, providing commercial goods and services in a competitive environment.

Under the Freedom From Government Competition Act, Federal agencies will be required to identify those Government activities that can be performed more cost effectively and efficiently by the private sector. After these areas are identified, the private sector will have the opportunity to compete for providing those goods and services. In 1987, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that 1.4 million Federal employees were engaged in so-called commercial activities. The Heritage Foundation has estimated that if we contracted out those commercial activities to private industry, we could save taxpayers at least \$9 billion a year.

In addition to saving taxpayers money, the Freedom From Government Competition Act will help spur the growth of private businesses. This, in turn, will increase our tax base. In other words, we can reduce Federal spending and increase the revenues taken in by the Federal Government at the same time without raising taxes.

With a debt of almost \$5.5 trillion, this is the kind of legislation we need to actively pursue. H.R. 716 is a modest proposal. It does not require the Government to contract out everything. I realize that the Government performs a number of functions that only the Government should do. In fact, this legislation specifically exempts those functions which are inherently governmental. If the Government can do something cheaper and better than the

private sector, then it will be allowed to continue to do so under this legislation.

Nonetheless, all too often Government agencies are involved in activities that it cannot do well. In the end, this winds up hurting small businesses costing taxpayers hundreds of millions if not billions of dollars and hurts the economic growth of our private sector.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, we should pin a medal on anyone who can survive in small business today. Everything we do in big government seems only to benefit extremely big business. I have nothing against big business. However, big businesses seem to get almost all of the tax breaks, the big government contracts, the favorable regulatory rulings and all sorts of incentives such as free land or other inducements. We do very little for small businesses, and this is why so many of them are going under or are in a real struggle to survive. This is one thing we can do for small businesses. This is a small step in the whole scheme of things. However, this legislation will go a long way toward helping our small businesses survive.

Mr. Speaker, if the Government were the answer to all of our problems, then the Soviet Union would have been heaven on Earth. But our Founding Fathers felt that most problems could be solved through the private sector and that Government should only do those things that the people could not do for themselves. The Freedom From Government Competition Act will return this great country to the type of governing system that our Founding Fathers envisioned. I hope my colleagues will help me stop big government agencies from competing with small businesses and join me in supporting the Freedom From Government Competition Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. HULSHOF] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. HULSHOF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 412, OROVILLE-TONASKET CLAIM SETTLEMENT AND CONVEYANCE ACT

Mr. GOSS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-19) on the resolution (H. Res. 94) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 412) to approve a settlement agreement between the Bureau of Reclamation and the Oroville-Tonasket Irrigation District, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.